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ART. XXIV.—*Report of the commissioner of the school fund, May 1822, to the honorable general assembly of the state of Connecticut, holden at New Haven on the first Wednesday of May 1822. Signed James Hillhouse, commissioner of the school fund.*

EDUCATION, in its various forms, as we have already had several opportunities to remark, is a subject which at present excites more than usual interest and inquiry in all parts of the union; not only among individuals, but in legislative bodies. From its intimate connexion with the public prosperity and improvement, few subjects have a stronger claim on the attention of all classes of the community. We have, therefore, thought it would be, on this account, peculiarly acceptable to such of our readers as are disposed to speculate on this topic, to see occasionally, in our pages, such facts as are well ascertained in the practice of any state, or of any portion of our country, in the administration of so important a concern. It is of great moment, that the regulations adopted respecting schools, as well primary as those of a higher order, should be originally suited to the somewhat peculiar circumstances of the people of this country. To this object, a full knowledge of the excellencies and defects of existing systems of education may greatly contribute. It may indeed be thought, from the facility with which many of our laws are amended or repealed, that a plan for public schools can be as easily improved, when experience shall have shown its imperfections, as any ordinary statute, or the charter of some petty corporation; yet a little attention will satisfy an inquirer, that there are few subjects where prejudice has greater sway than in this, or where the public good is more liable to be sacrificed to local and individual interests, partial benefit, and narrow views.

The state of Connecticut, as is probably known to many of our readers, possesses a large fund, known by the name of the School Fund, which, by an article in the constitution of that state, is appropriated exclusively to the benefit of common schools. From the report of the commissioner of this fund to the legislature of Connecticut, in May last, the title of which report stands at the head of this article, it appears, that the amount of dividends to common schools, the preceding year, that is, in October 1821, and March 1822, was no less a sum

than \$67,791.20. A part of this money, however, was a certain portion of the state tax, which is by law annually added to the interest of the fund. This fund for the advancement of learning, in the single department of common schools, whether considered in reference to the resources of the people who have made it, or to what has been done in other parts of the United States for the same object, is a provision so extraordinary, and indeed unprecedented, that we have been induced to make some inquiry into its origin, application, and effects. In the prosecution of our design, we have been led to investigate, to some extent, the progress of the school-system of Connecticut, and have noticed certain facts, which we have thought it not improper to detail, especially as they seem to throw some light upon what are understood to be the prevailing opinions and feelings of the people of that state on the general subject of education.

The present state of Connecticut was originally two distinct colonies, the colony of Connecticut, and the colony of New Haven. It does not appear, that among the original laws of either of those colonies, any very express provision was made for the regulation and support of schools. Both governments, as is well known, managed the most important concerns, in their respective communities, not according to the provisions of any written law, but the discretion of the magistrates and clergy; that being ordered and enforced, which appeared reasonable and expedient, as cases of very different kinds, in civil and even in domestic life, came under consideration. The education of children, according to this primitive, and, in some respects, patriarchal system, seems to have been recognized from the first as an indispensable duty, and to have been enforced by severe penalties; but the several plantations were allowed, either to establish schools within their respective limits, or to teach their children the elements of learning in the family, as, in the feeble state of those colonies, might be thought most convenient.

This was undoubtedly the original plan of education in the colony of New Haven. In the system of laws of that colony, published in the year 1656, the following are the provisions for 'children's education.'

'It is ordered that the deputies for the particular court, in each plantation within this jurisdiction, for the time being, or

where there are no such deputies, the constable or other officers in public trust, shall from time to time have a vigilant eye over their brethren and neighbors within the limits of the said plantation, that all parents and masters do duly endeavor, either by their own ability and labor, or by *improving* such schoolmaster or other helps and means as the plantation doth afford, or the family may conveniently provide, that all their children and apprentices, as they grow capable, may, through God's blessing, obtain at least so much as to be able to read the scriptures and other good and profitable printed books in the English tongue, being their native language," &c.

Parents and masters, found to neglect this duty, were, on the first complaint, to be fined ten shillings; on the second complaint, three months after the first, twenty shillings; on the third complaint, they were to be fined still higher, or their children or apprentices were to be taken from them, and put under the care of others, males till twenty-one, and females till eighteen years of age.

This law contains, what appears from various circumstances to have been the practice in the colony of New Haven from its first settlement, but probably the system had never been reduced to writing till the compilation of this code. As soon as a government had been regularly organized, a colony grammar school was also established in New Haven, under the superintendence of Ezekiel Cheever, who was afterwards master of the Latin school in Boston, and whose Latin *Accidence*, compiled in that method, 'which he found most advantageous by seventy years' experience,' may be known to some of our readers. In the year 1654, a plan for the establishment of a college was brought by the Rev. John Davenport before the colonial legislature, and the town of New-Haven made a donation of land to the proposed seminary. A bequest from governor Hopkins, in 1656, enabled the government to take some measures towards the erection of the colony grammar school into a college; but the dissolution of the colony, which soon followed, prevented the completion of their design. The colony school has since been known by the name of the Hopkins grammar school, and is the oldest literary institution in Connecticut.

In the colony of Connecticut, the laws respecting schools seem not to have been materially different. In the laws of that colony, published in the year 1672, eight years after the

union of Connecticut and New Haven, there is a provision on the subject of education, very similar in its language to that we have just copied from the first New Haven code. It is there ordered, that 'the selectmen of every town, in their several precincts and quarters, shall have a vigilant eye over their brethren and neighbors, to see that none of them shall suffer so much barbarism, in any of their families, as not to endeavor, by themselves or others, to teach their children and apprentices so much learning, as may enable them perfectly to read the English tongue,' &c. The penalty for neglect was twenty shillings. In the same code, it is ordered, that every town, containing fifty householders, 'shall forthwith appoint one, within their town, to teach all such children as shall resort to him, to write and read, whose wages shall be paid either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in general, as the major part of those who order the prudentials of the town shall appoint,' &c. It is further provided, 'that, in every county town, there shall be set up and kept a grammar school, for the use of the county, the master thereof being able to instruct youths so far, as they may be fitted for college.'

In the year 1677, to render the existing law respecting schools more effectual, it was enacted, 'that every town, by the said law ordered to keep a school, that shall neglect the same above three months in the year, shall forfeit five pounds for every defect, and said fine shall be paid towards the maintenance of the Latin school in their county: all breaches of this law to be taken notice of and presented by the grand jury at every county court.' The following year the number of families in a town, obliged to maintain a public school, was reduced from fifty to thirty.

It appears that, notwithstanding the several penalties for neglect of maintaining schools, the laws on this subject were not universally executed, as in the year 1690, we find an additional statute, which, after reciting in the preamble, that there were still 'persons unable to read the English tongue, and thereby incapable to read the holy word of God, or the good laws of this colony,' among other provisions, contains the following; 'that the grand jurymen, in each town, do, once in a year, at least, visit each family they suspect to neglect this order, [to teach their children and servants to 'read dis-

tinctly the English tongue,'] and satisfy themselves whether all children under age, and servants in such suspected families, can read the English tongue, or be in a good procedure to learn the same or not; and if they find any such children and servants not taught, as their years are capable of, they shall return the names of the parents or masters of the said children or servants to the next county court,' &c. The penalty is twenty shillings 'for each child or servant, whose teaching is or shall be neglected, contrary to this order.'

In the year 1700, a law was passed, which placed the common schools of Connecticut on the foundation where they continued, with little variation, till since the establishment of the present fund. It was then required, that in every town, having seventy or more householders, a constant school should be kept, and when there were less than seventy, a school should be kept half the year. It was likewise enacted, that the inhabitants of every town should pay forty shillings on every thousand pounds of taxable property, estimated according to a rule prescribed by the legislature in their general system of taxation, for the support of the schoolmaster, to be collected with the public or county tax; and if any town failed to provide a schoolmaster according to law, this sum was to be collected and paid to the county treasury, as a fine upon such negligent town. Where this fund was insufficient to support the school, the deficiency was to be made up, one half by the inhabitants of the town, and the other half by the parents or masters of the children. By a subsequent law, towns and ecclesiastical societies were empowered to divide themselves into districts, and to alter the same; and each district was entitled to its proportion of the public money, for the support of its school.

We have gone, perhaps, more into detail, in this case, than many of our readers may think necessary; others, however, we have no doubt, will be gratified with a full view of early legislation, on a subject so important as the establishment and progressive improvement of a system of general education in an infant colony. It is obvious from the facts here stated, that the legislature and the great body of the people of Connecticut were from the first fully determined on securing the instruction of every individual, at least in the rudiments of learning. The several changes, in the details of their system,

did not originate in any instability of purpose, but were rendered necessary by the delinquencies of certain towns, where, from various causes, the existing penalties were insufficient to secure to the laws a prompt and entire execution. The clause in the law of 1700, by which a tax of forty shillings on every thousand pounds was collected through the colony for the support of instructors, and by which the benefit of this tax was limited to those towns which supported schools the time prescribed by law, undoubtedly contains the efficient measure which secured the object so long aimed at, the universal establishment of common schools. The tax for schools being collected with the county tax, had not the odium attached to it of a fine incurred by delinquency; while it was attended with all the advantages which such a fine could promise. It was left to the option of the towns, whether they would make the necessary addition to the public money, and expend it for the purpose designated by the legislature, or, after it had been collected, leave it for the common and ordinary uses of the county. The consequence was such as had been anticipated from the law, and schools were every where maintained.

From this time very little alteration was made in the system of primary education. Occasionally new regulations* were thought necessary, but the great features of the scheme were unchanged. From what is known of the state of the schools, as well as from universal tradition, it appears, that the laws were now rigidly executed; a school was brought to every man's door; the poor, and even the slave, were always within the reach of instruction; and hence, for more than a century, in Connecticut, a native of mature age, who, in the language of the old statutes, 'was unable to read the English tongue,' has been looked on as a prodigy.

We have already mentioned that among the first laws enacted on the subject of education, after the union of the two colonies of Hartford and New Haven, was one providing

* One new statute appears in the edition of the laws of 1718, which contains a provision highly characteristic. 'If any be unable to do so much, [that is, 'to teach their children and apprentices so much learning as may enable them perfectly to read the English tongue'] that then at the least, they procure such children and apprentices to learn some short orthodox catechism, without book, that they may be able to answer to the questions that shall be propounded to them, out of such catechism, by their parents or masters, or ministers, when they shall call them to an account of what they have learned in that kind,' &c.—Penalty, twenty shillings, in each case, for the use of the poor.

for a grammar school in each county town, and a small grant of land was made to the four counties of Hartford, New Haven, Fairfield and New London, for the support of such schools. As this law, however, instituting grammar schools, was enforced by no penalty, and the grant for their maintenance was very inconsiderable, nothing effectual seems to have been accomplished. By the statute of 1677, as already stated, the forfeitures of those towns, which neglected to maintain common schools according to law, accrued to the benefit of the Latin schools in their respective counties ;—but this provision was no doubt very unacceptable to the people, as it was enforced a few years only. In the year 1690, the legislature again took up the subject of grammar schools, and ‘considering the necessity and great advantage of good literature,’ passed a law establishing ‘two free schools, to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, and the Latin and Greek tongues, the one at Hartford and the other at New Haven.’ These schools were to be maintained, partly by the counties in which they were placed, partly by the ‘school revenue,’ and partly by the respective towns of Hartford and New Haven. This project seems to have failed ; as in the new law respecting schools, in the year 1700, the subject of grammar schools is passed over, in the general provision, that a grammar school shall be maintained in the chief town of each county, without prescribing any plan for its establishment or support. The law, as was probably anticipated, remained a dead letter ; and no subsequent attempt to afford adequate encouragement to schools of a higher order, at least, no attempt attended with success, so far as we have been able to learn, has ever been made. We consider it, however, as no feeble testimony to the importance and even necessity of superior schools, that exertions for their establishment should have been commenced in the very infancy of those colonies. The subject was then judged of on its own merits, without any undue influence from the fear of popular dislike. No trial had been made, and the measures first taken were, no doubt, approved by all, till it appeared, that, in their execution, expense would be incurred. But poverty and a scattered population might then be urged with some plausibility against any expenditure not for objects of first necessity, and which was not in its immediate effect for the

equal benefit of all. But at any time during the last century, and especially at present, whatever may have been or may still be the plea, the real reason for limiting the patronage of the legislature to schools of the lowest kind, must be something very different from the want of ability to support them. The fact seems to be, that originally the necessity of confining all expenditures for instruction to common schools was real. The value of that literature which is taught in higher seminaries, was duly appreciated, but the legislature felt, that a very important object had been attained in the general establishment of common schools, and left it to their successors to improve upon their system, as the means of the people should become more abundant, and the community have a stronger conviction of the benefit of an enlarged education. But their expectations have not been realized. The public mind had an early bent, perhaps from too much being attempted at first, or from some injudicious measures at first adopted, but which are not now distinctly known, against all legislative provisions for academies or a college, which it has been impossible to correct, notwithstanding the original cause, certainly so far as poverty may have been connected with the effect, has long ceased to exist.*

Yale College had its origin in the efforts of the clergy. It was founded in the year 1700, but the government did little for its support and encouragement. From a report, which now lies before us, of a committee of the legislature of Connecticut at their session in New Haven in May last, it appears, that the grants from the state to that institution down to the year 1792, that is, in the first ninety two years of its existence, amount to little more than twenty thousand dollars. Its growth and prosperity were owing, in all beyond this sum, entirely to private benefactions. Of this twenty thousand dollars, no inconsiderable part was derived from such sources,

* Besides the very small grant of land to the four counties of Hartford, New Haven, Fairfield, and New London, for the support of Grammar schools, no appropriation for any similar object, so far as we can learn, has been made in Connecticut, except to the Episcopal academy at Cheshire. This academy has had a grant of a lottery to raise fifteen thousand dollars. If two thirds, or even one half, of this sum has been obtained, considering the age of the academy, and the comparative number of those it was intended more particularly to benefit, it is much the largest grant ever made in Connecticut for any literary institution. The other academies of the state have been established by private beneficence and individual exertions.

as clearly show, that the state was never disposed to make heavy sacrifices for the benefit of its college. Among the 'ways and means,' we notice, in the documents before us, the proceeds of a prize ship, excise on rum, wild land, and a lottery.

In the year 1792, a grant was made to Yale College by the legislature of Connecticut, and enlarged in 1796, by which, according to the report, to which we last referred, the college received \$40629.80. This money, it appears, was derived from certain arrearages of taxes, which had been imposed to meet expenses incurred in the revolutionary war. As Congress was about to assume the state debts, payments from the state to its creditors were stopped, and a sum of money from this source was ultimately at the disposal of the legislature. The proposition to appropriate it to the aid of Yale College, as the measure contemplated no new burden on the public, afforded a fair opportunity of trying the real feelings of the state with respect to that institution. The appropriation met with much opposition, especially that part of it, which came under the consideration of the legislature in the year 1796; but was finally made in consequence of the very great exertions of a few liberal minded individuals, among whom the present commissioner of the school fund is understood to have acted a distinguished part, and to deserve no small share of the honor of that measure. Numerous members of the house of representatives were well known to have given their votes for the appropriation with the full persuasion that it would be the last act of their political life, and the event proved the correctness of their anticipations. Seldom has there been a case, where a public measure, dictated by no party or selfish views, has met from a people a more decided disapprobation, than this grant to Yale College encountered in the enlightened state of Connecticut.

We have been the more particular in our statements respecting the grant to Yale College, as it furnishes, in its progress and termination, full and satisfactory proof of the real state of public opinion and feelings in Connecticut respecting all seminaries of learning superior to common schools, a state of public sentiment, to which, as we understand, is to be attributed, what appears to us, as we shall soon

have occasion more fully to remark, the somewhat partial and injudicious appropriation of the school fund. Individuals in that state have lamented this alienation of the public mind from all legislative aid to literature and science, as injurious to the best interests of the community ; but other individuals, more numerous and more active, have ever found their advantage in fomenting the popular delusion, and, if we are correctly informed, there are few states in the union, where the vulgar prejudice is more current, that all learning not taught in a common school, is for the benefit of the rich and the few, to the prejudice, perhaps, of the many. This unfounded opinion, refuted as it is by innumerable facts forcing themselves upon the view of the most unobserving, may, indeed, be heard in more states than one, from the mouths of grave legislators, and what is more marvellous still, there are those of them who seem really to believe what they say.

It is not, therefore, surprising, in this state of public sentiment in Connecticut, that whatever funds have been at any time at the disposal of the legislature, have been, with few and inconsiderable exceptions, appropriated to the support of common schools. In the year 1733 the avails of the sale of seven new townships in the western part of the colony, were divided among the towns ; the interest to be applied to the support of common schools forever. In the year 1765 certain sums of money due for excise on goods, were divided in the same manner. But what laid the foundation of the Connecticut school fund, was money received for lands belonging to that state in the northeastern part of the present state of Ohio. The sale of these lands was effected in the year 1795 for \$1,200,000. Here was an opportunity seldom enjoyed by any people, of providing for every department of education, so that each might afford, in the operation of a regular and well proportioned system, its proper aid and support to the others. The interest of this fund, however, after much debate in the legislature, where several projects of somewhat different kinds were very amply discussed, and after great popular excitement, was finally appropriated to the favorite object, the support of common schools, and so decided has public opinion continued on this subject, that this appropriation, as we observe by an article in the new constitution of Connecticut, is now made imperative on the legislature.

The amount of the school fund is now considerably greater than in the year 1795, when it was first established. In the report of the commissioner in May 1821, the property of the fund is stated, in its gross amount, at \$1,858,074.33. In the opinion of the commissioner, after a liberal allowance for losses which might occur, the capital of the school fund might, at that time, be safely estimated at \$1,700,000, which is an advance of \$500,000 on the original sum. This increase of the fund is understood to be owing, in no small degree, to the able management and indefatigable exertions of the present commissioner, whose services have commanded approbation where it was least to be expected, and who furnishes an example of the ascendancy of ability and integrity even in times of great party animosity. Of the sums which have been actually divided to schools, we notice in a schedule connected with the report of 1819, that the amount, from March 1799 to March 1819, is stated to be \$827,013.13.

The original rule of distribution of the interest of this fund among the several school societies and districts, was the amount of taxable property, according to its estimated value, belonging to each of them. This rule was complained of as unfavorable to the interests of the poor; and much pains were taken to produce the conviction in the legislature and among the people generally, that the large towns received much more than their just proportion of the public money. Accordingly in 1820, a new rule of distribution was adopted, by which the interest of the school fund is now divided among the several school districts, according to the number of children in each, between the ages of four and sixteen, and provision was made for an annual enumeration. This measure was urged with great zeal by the representatives of the small towns. Little opposition was made to it, especially by those who were more particularly the objects of attack. The rule itself did not appear very objectionable, and it was besides manifest to all who had attended to the state of population in Connecticut, and who were at all competent to form an opinion on such a question, that the large towns could be only gainers by the change proposed. This has, accordingly, been the result, in a degree even greater than was anticipated by those who saw the real tendency of the new law. It is true that a new system of taxation was, at

that time, under discussion, by which the amount of taxes paid by the large towns would be considerably increased. If the old rule of distribution was retained, the school-money received by those towns would be increased proportionably. This consideration undoubtedly had its due influence ; but the sum now received by several of the large towns, respecting which we have more exact information, is considerably greater than they would claim on the ground of the amount of their tax-bills.

As to the mode in which the common schools in Connecticut are managed, the following particulars are all in which our readers can be supposed to take much interest. All the inhabitants living within the limits of ecclesiastical societies incorporated by law, constitute school societies, elect officers, build school houses, establish school districts, appoint a committee of one for each district, whose duty it is, to manage the concerns of the district, and provide an instructor for the school with the assent of the district, and the approbation of the visitors. The visitors are appointed by each school society, whose duty it is to examine instructors, displace such as are incompetent, visit the schools twice, at least, during each season for schooling, and they may require of the master such exercises of the youth as will show their proficiency in learning. No person can keep a school till he has been examined and approved by the visitors.

We have not been able to ascertain with the exactness we could wish, the number of district schools in Connecticut. Dr Trumbull, in the second volume of his history of that state, published in 1818, states the number at fifteen hundred and eighty, 'according to the best collection he had been able to obtain.' He adds, that in some of them, there are a hundred scholars or more, and in others not more than twenty. He supposes, that 'on an average, they will amount to fifty five or fifty six.' From the inquiries we have made, we are satisfied that this statement is not far from the truth.

Our readers no doubt are now prepared to ask, what great advantage has the state of Connecticut derived from its school fund, and how far has this fund contributed to promote the particular object to which it is devoted, the general diffusion of elementary learning ?—According to the old laws, as we have already seen, schools were maintained in the several

districts ; and one school at least was supported through the year in each town containing seventy householders, and six months where the number of householders was less than seventy. By the present system we do not find that there is any obligation on the school societies or districts to support schools any longer, than the public money affords the requisite aliment ; and the consequence must be, what we are informed is extensively true, that the continuance of schools is determined by a very obvious and convenient rule. Taxation for schools being infrequent, must be borne with impatience ; and if some school societies increase the school money by a tax, the practice is gradually discontinued, and will soon entirely cease. As to time then, we do not find that any thing has been gained by the schools from the operation of the fund. If some schools continue longer, each year, others are brought sooner to a close, the amount of time, through the whole, being not materially varied.

It does not appear from the laws of Connecticut, nor do we learn from such inquiries as we have made, that the qualifications of instructors have been increased, or the branches of instruction multiplied through any influence of the fund. If education in common schools has assumed a higher character within the last thirty years, it is owing rather to the more elevated standard of instruction through the country ; and the improvements, probably, are no greater, than they would have been, if the school fund had never existed. The great advantage, then, of the Connecticut school fund, appears, on investigation, to be this,—it relieves the several school societies from taxation, an advantage, no doubt, which is duly appreciated. Admitting, however, that it is a privilege, and we are not disposed to deny it to be such, for an inhabitant of Connecticut to be able to say, that schools formerly paid for by those who enjoyed their advantages, are now supported by a fund, and so cost nothing ; would it not be a privilege far greater, to be able to designate the particular improvements, which the school fund has been the means of introducing into the system of school education ? Where means so ample and imposing are provided, we look, of course, for some unusual and splendid result. To be informed that a fund which enables a community no larger than Connecticut to expend more than sixty thousand dol-

lars a year on schools, and which will soon afford ninety or one hundred thousand dollars a year for the same object, produces no visible effect, except in diminishing taxation, and that the whole benefit is limited to the pocket, much as we admire thrift and good management, leaves on our minds, to say the least, a strong feeling of disappointment. A school fund, according to the common rules of judging, ought to profit the schools, as well as their supporters.

We would not be understood to disapprove of legislative aid to common schools, but to aim at having it so regulated as to produce its full and proper effect. If it were possible, we would take from the common schools of Connecticut nothing which they now enjoy, and would merely apply a portion of the additional income, which will soon be realized, to the encouragement of the higher branches of education. Nothing which could be done would, more directly than this, benefit the common schools themselves. Let a superior school, intermediate between the common schools and the university, be maintained in each county of the state, where all of those, who aspire to teach in common schools, may be themselves thoroughly instructed. Such a measure would give new vigor to the whole system of education. The board of visitors, which now decides on the qualifications of instructors, must be, in most instances, a very imperfect check on the intrusion of ignorance. The teachers, it is understood, have now very seldom any other preparation, than they receive in the very school, where they afterwards instruct, or in the school of some neighboring district, where the advantages for improvement are no better. If this, however, cannot be done, and the whole income of the school fund must be appropriated directly to common schools, we see no reason why teachers in these schools should not be obliged to qualify themselves for their employment, in such higher schools or academies as now exist.

There is, indeed, in the present law of Connecticut respecting schools, a provision, which might seem at first view to answer, in part, the end proposed. The provision is to this effect: that any school society shall have liberty, by a vote of two thirds of the inhabitants present, to institute a school of a higher order, to instruct youth in English grammar, composition, geography, and the learned languages; pupils to be admitted by the visitors, and such school to have its proportion of the

public money. But this law, as appears on the face of it, must be wholly inoperative. We have, indeed, heard, that in one town a vote of two thirds of the inhabitants was obtained for the institution of such a school ; and the same thing may have happened in a few other towns, but cannot learn, that there is at present in Connecticut a single school instituted in the manner contemplated by this law. The law stands as evidence, that correct views of what is really needed are entertained by a portion of the legislature, but from the inadequacy of its provisions, it is evidence no less striking of the actual state of public opinion.

In looking back upon the statements we have thus presented to our readers, one or two remarks are forced upon us. The first regards the noble testimony borne to the characters of the Fathers of Connecticut, by their laws for the support of schools. To feel the strength of this testimony, we have but to compare their condition with these their efforts ; to see them, a handful of men, scattered in a few hamlets through the native wilderness, exposed to the most harassing of public dangers, the daily and nightly dread of a savage foe ; and yet enacting laws, which should send the grand jury twice a year into every family to see that its children, aye, its apprentices and servants, ‘ could read the English tongue.’ These are the men, to whom our brethren beyond the sea courteously allude, when they say, that ‘ the Adam and Eve of America came from Newgate.’—How does their conduct and policy contrast with that of the richest and most powerful nation of the present day ! What an apparition would it not be at the English Assizes—a true bill found by the grand jury against the proprietor of a cotton factory in Manchester, for that he had neglected to afford his apprentices ‘ at least so much, as should enable them to read the scriptures and other good and profitable printed books in the English tongue.’ Such a bill would transform even Mr Brougham into *Amicus Curie* ; and do more to promote the education of the commonalty of England, than all the Bells and Lancasters have done, and all their monitors.

We cannot but observe, also, on the extraordinary perversity of opinion, by no means confined to Connecticut, that establishments for the higher branches of education are undeserving of public patronage, as being exclusively for the benefit of the

rich. This same opinion has been urged in Virginia, and nobly and not unsuccessfully combatted by the distinguished friends and patrons of her university. The same opinion has prompted some measures, which have been brought forward in the legislature of Massachusetts, for the two last years, to the shame of their agitators. It is a gross appeal from the common sense to the avarice of men. Public patronage of academies and colleges for higher education is precisely a tax on the rich, for the benefit of the poor. The rich, it is true, send their children to them ; but if there were no colleges at home, they would send their sons abroad. Look at the states in America, where schools and colleges do not flourish, and what is the relative effect on the two classes of society ? The rich pay more, it is true, than they otherwise would pay, but they support private teachers and family tutors, for the elementary education of their children, and send their sons to Princeton, New Haven, Cambridge, and to Europe. To the rich man it is of comparatively little consequence, whether the state government, under which he lives, be willing or not to endow institutions where his sons can be educated. He can send them where a wiser policy prevails ; and when they come back, they will possess more exclusively that power and influence in society, which superior education confers. The poor man, on the other hand, wants a college near at hand, in his own state, where a considerable part of the requisite supplies can be furnished from his frugal home. He has no means to purchase bills of exchange on distant cities. He cannot add the costs of travelling and the expenses of distant maintenance to the necessary charges of academical education. If the state will provide him a college where he can send his sons, he will do it. He will dispense with their personal services—no small sacrifice in a country like this—he will strain his narrow means to furnish the barely essential ; but he can do no more. And will any one say, that when the government looks round upon its constituents, sees the rich alone able to get an education, while the poor are deprived of this inestimable privilege ; and to remedy this great evil, lays a general tax for an academy or college for the benefit of those, who must otherwise want the means of liberal education altogether, will any one say, that this is exclusively for the benefit of the rich ? It is a malignant absurdity. *Exclusively* beneficial it is certainly and

ought to be to no one. But eminently and chiefly beneficial it is to the poor. The rich can do well enough without it. The poor must have it, or nothing. This alone enables the poor to bring their talents and industry into the market, and thus rise, by dint of merit, to those trusts and to that influence, which otherwise will fall exclusively into the hands of the rich. Hitherto, by the blessing of Providence, the sons of the poor have been enabled to do this. The great men of America have been mostly nursed in an honorable poverty. The pious and faithful ministers, the upright magistrates, the solid professional characters, the intelligent statesmen, and the enterprising merchants, by which America, from such poor beginnings, has been raised to such a height of prosperity, have been mostly the children of those, who labored with their own hands. There has been, till the last generation, little or no wealth in the country, and the distinction of rich and poor has been nearly nominal. With the growth of riches, this distinction will become important. The leisure commanded by wealth will more and more give persons of moderate capacity the advantage in the competition for the honors of society. At this moment, then, of all others, to cry out against the endowment of places of education, as a tax on the poor, in favor of the rich, is to betray the interests of the poor; and to play the game of the rich under the pretence of abating their immunities.

The Public Latin School in Boston affords so clear an example of the justice of our remarks, that we cannot but appeal to it. We have no hesitation in pronouncing that school equal to any school or academy, public or private, within our knowledge, in the United States. The specimens of proficiency given by its pupils, and laid before the public in the Prize Book, are certainly beyond any thing in this way, which has been attempted in our country, and compare honorably with the exhibitions of the learned schools of Europe. This school in Boston is free. It has been raised to its present excellence, and is supported by the city, at an expense beyond that of some of our American colleges; and the children of the poorer citizens find equal admission with those of the richer, and of course actually compose the majority of the pupils. The expense naturally falls most on those, who pay most of the taxes, that is, on the rich. Thus for an exceedingly small increase of his tax, the poor man can send his son to one of the very

best schools in the United States. For perhaps fifty cents' annual addition to his tax-bill, he procures his child those means of education, which could not be had at a private academy under two or three hundred dollars. In this way every small trader and mechanic in Boston, at an expense wholly nominal, is enabled to give his children that education, which before was within the reach of independent fortunes alone. The case is precisely the same with the patronage of colleges.

Finally, we cannot but express our surprize, that the intelligent citizens of Connecticut should have given such just ground to the reproach of neglecting the interests of the College at New Haven. One would have thought that, with such ample means in their hands, the patronage of Yale College would have been the favorite policy of the state. Nothing in Connecticut can, of course, be so honorable to it as this institution. In no way can the citizens of Connecticut expect to exercise so considerable an influence on our common country, as through the medium of a literary establishment of commanding respectability, which gathers some of the most promising of the American youth into her chief city, to receive the most important part of their education, under the influence of her laws, manners, and character. To appeal, moreover, to a feeling which has perhaps had too great influence over the legislatures who have successively withheld the public patronage from Yale, we would add, that on the simple footing of pecuniary account, the state is much indebted to the college. The latter brings annually into circulation in Connecticut many thousands of dollars, and has done so for a long course of years. It lays no small part of the country under contribution, to increase the wealth of Connecticut; and it were but common justice in the state, to return into the funds of the college a small portion of the means, which the college gathers for the state. One can scarcely look on with patience and behold a fund of \$1,700,000 exhausted in bounties to encourage the people to have bad schools, while one of the most respectable and useful colleges in the country is allowed to go a begging.